



GHANA

Good Year FOR AFRICA CHRISTIAN PRESS

Africa Christian Press publisher, Richard Crabbe, is optimistic about the opportunities ahead.

Richard Crabbe, general manager of Africa Christian Press (ACP) Accra, Ghana, says that 1999 "was a very good year." ACP, founded in 1964 and one of black Africa's foremost evan-

gelical publishing houses, struggled in the 1990s as the book industry in Africa was hit by the severe economic conditions affecting most of the continent. In these circumstances ACP could only introduce six new titles to the African book market per year.

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All of this changed in 1999. "God enabled us to publish 18 new titles and five reprints," says Crabbe. ACP also scooped an opportunity to deliver 73,000 copies of books to

the government-funded public school system. "We successfully completed delivery of an order of 17 titles which formed part of a government program to supply children

in Ghanaian public schools with supplementary reading material." The ACP staff are particularly excited by this opportunity to place their publications in schools because of the potential impact this will have on children. "We pray that these young lives—the future of our society—would be positively influenced by the values they read in our books."

The accomplishments of his organization this

past year reminds Crabbe of how God delights in using simple people and organizations despite their origins. "I think of our own publications at ACP," he says. "Many of our writers are first-time authors, people who would easily be looked down upon. Somehow, God continues to use their books to bless thousands of Africans."

Encouraged by the effectiveness of books written by "people who be easily looked down upon" ACP has intensified its writer-development activities. In 1999, ACP editors targeted a new audience for writer training—children drawn from local schools. The 22 children ACP put through writer training produced results. "Their enthusiasm and hard work has resulted in 10 publishable stories which we plan to release in two books early next year," reports Crabbe.

Although ACP's major business transactions in 1999 were in Ghana, the organization is committed to reaching audiences in different parts of

Africa. A new distributor was signed on for South Africa. ACP continues to establish distribution arrangements in other countries but their most critical target is neighboring Nigeria. "One in five Africans is Nigerian, so distribution there is strategic for spreading the gospel effectively for all of Africa," says Crabbe. At press time, ACP was still in negotiation with possible distributors in the West African nation of 120 million people.

Crabbe is aware that while 1999 was a "great year," things could be different in 2000. "It will be tough to match this year's output of books," he admits but quickly adds "That serves to motivate us even more." ❖